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6 August 2004

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Dear Sirs,

URGENT**INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/SG03/00090**
"EXTENSION SOCKET DEVICE WITH A CORD STORAGE AND
DISPENSING SYSTEM"
POWER BRIDGE (SINGAPORE) PTE. LTD., et al.

Our clients have given instructions to write in response to the Written Opinion issued in relation to the captioned PCT application. Our clients would like to amend the claims. Please find enclosed the following documents, for your attention:

1. A marked-up copy of pages 5 and 6 of the claims, with amendments outlined in black; and
2. A clean copy of pages 5 and 6 as replacement pages.

We would also like to present the applicant's comments as follows:

The Examiner has stated that he considers that the only feature of the present invention that has not been anticipated by US patent 5,071,367 is that of the ring-like intermediate wall of the smaller, bottom hollow part. The Examiner considers that the integral formation of the ring-like intermediate wall with the bottom hollow part is within the scope of the technician skilled in the art and therefore the invention as defined by Claim 1 is not inventive in light of the disclosures of US 5,071,367. The Examiner further considers that the invention as defined by Claim 2 is not inventive as the predetermined length of the cord is within the scope of the person skilled in the art and that Claims 3 to 5 are not inventive in light of US 5,071,367.

In response, the applicant has amended the claims of this PCT application. The amendments serve to clarify the position and therefore the function of the receiving track as formed by the smaller hollow part and ring-like intermediate wall in Claim 1, and removes original Claim 2.

The applicant submits that the accommodation of the cord by the described receiving track, comprising the ring-like intermediate wall is not obvious in light of the disclosures of US 5,071,367. The applicant submits that the

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provision of the ring-like intermediate wall as part of the smaller hollow part to provide the receiving track has several advantages over the cord storing power strip described in US 5,071,367.

The prior art, including US 5,071,367, does not disclose or recognise the objective of storing the cord in a neat and tidy manner wherein any section of cord that is unused is able to be completely concealed. In each of the embodiments of the invention described in US 5,071,367 the cord is wound around a cord receiving groove member, positioned around the perimetral edge of the device. As such the cord, once received by the cord receiving groove member, remains visible.

The present application as defined in the amended claims, discloses an extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system wherein the particular integral arrangement of the endless intermediate wall with the smaller, bottom hollow part forms a receiving track which is wholly accessible via an opening adjacent the bottom of the device. In this manner, the cord once received by the receiving track and retained therein, may be completely hidden from view when the device is in use. The objective of storing the cord in a neat and tidy manner has been recognised and achieved by the particular arrangement of the feature of the endless intermediate wall to form the receiving track. Therefore, the present invention has the advantage of retaining the cord in a more concealing and aesthetically pleasing manner.

The arrangement of the endless intermediate wall to form the receiving track which is accessible from an opening at the rear of the device has further functional advantages over each of the embodiments of the invention disclosed in US 5,071,367.

Referring to the embodiment of the invention of US 5,071,367 as shown in Figure 3 of the specification, there is shown and described a cord storing power strip having a groove (48) that has a width the distance of twice the diameter of the cord. Effectively, the groove has two troughs. The cord is wound around and received in each trough of the groove and retained therein by a plurality of nubs spaced along the lip of the groove.

The specification of US 5,071,367 describes that any number of grooves may be provided in order to retain further revolutions of the cord around the device. However, any section of cord not retained adjacent either the upper side wall (50) or the lower side wall (52) would not be directly retained within the groove by nubs. Thus, any such section of cord would be retained in the groove by means of tension only, necessitating that the entire length of cord be wound around the groove in order to provide such adequate tension. Revolutions of cord that are received by further troughs not adjacent either the upper or lower side wall would lead to those sections of cord being improperly retained and therefore may become loose if the tension of the whole of the cord is not adequate.

In comparison, the arrangement of the present invention wherein the endless intermediate wall, together with the walls of the larger hollow part

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forms a receiving track accessible from the bottom of the device permits each and every revolution of the cord to be received and retained in the receiving track. The placement of a plurality of flexible retainer means along the bottom of the smaller hollow part serves to retain the cord within the receiving track, no matter how little or how much of the cord is placed therein. In this manner, any unused portion of cord can be effectively stored and retained within the receiving track. This offers greater safety benefits over the prior art, as the risk of tripping over unused portions of cord is reduced by the ability to store those portions.

Referring to the embodiment of the invention described in US 5,071,367 and shown in Figure 4, there is a cord storing power strip having a groove that is able to accommodate increasing revolutions of cord by increasing the depth of the groove outwardly from the innermost wall of the groove. As the depth of the groove is increased by multiples of the diameter of the cord, nubs are arranged at intervals along the upper and lower side walls of the groove, generally equal the diameter of the cord. Increasing the depth of the groove to accommodate further sections of cord necessarily results in one or two outcomes. Firstly, the size of the working enclosure, housing the wiring mechanism of the electrical outlets is reduced proportionally to the increased depth of the groove. Alternatively, the overall size of the body of the power strip must increase, thereby increasing the amount of materials and cost necessary to manufacture the power strip.

The Examiner is also of the opinion that the feature of retainer means as defined in the present application has been anticipated by the nubs as described in US 5,071,367. The applicant submits that although US 5,071,367 discloses a form of retaining means, it does not disclose a flexible retainer means, as is described in the present application.

US 5,071,367 discloses a retaining means in the form of a plurality of nubs (56) situated adjacent the lip of the groove accommodating the cord. The nubs may be construed as being rigid structures and are described as being "longitudinally spaced-apart or offset". The nubs are so spaced to reduce the force necessary to insert or remove the cord from the groove, as the nubs must press hard against the cord in order for the cord to be retained therein.

In comparison, the retainer means described in the present application is a flexible retainer means. The flexible retainer means comprises an inverted L-shaped element which partially covers the opening of the receiving track. The specification and amended Claim 2 of the present application describes a space between the inverted L-shaped element and the intermediate wall. Hence, it is the combination of the flexible nature of the retainer means in relation to the placement of the ring-like intermediate wall which provides a firm grip about the cord placed within the receiving track. As this flexible retainer means operates in a different manner to the nubs described in US 5,071,367, the applicant submits that this feature is both novel and inventive over the prior art.

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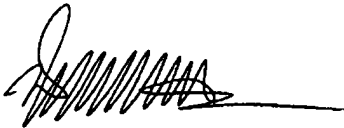
In light of the above discussions, it is submitted that the formation of the receiving track by the arrangement of the endless intermediate wall with the end and side walls of the larger hollow part would not be obvious to the technician skilled in the art and therefore the invention as defined by amended Claim 1 is inventive over the prior art.

The applicant also submits that in light of the above discussions, particularly in the retainer means of the present invention, that new Claims 2 to 4, as filed herewith, are also inventive over the prior art.

We hope the Austrian Patent Office would find this response with amendments satisfactory, and look forward to receiving a favorable International Preliminary Examination Report on this PCT application.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



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CLAIMS

- 1) An extension socket device, electrically equipped with a plurality of socket units (15) and a cord storage and dispensing system, comprises a ~~rectangular~~ housing body (10) formed by two hollow parts (10a, 10b), an electrical plug (22) and an extension cord (21) wherein ~~at~~ the larger hollow part (10a) of the ~~rectangular~~ housing body (10) comprises a top wall (11), ~~two~~ end walls (12) and ~~two~~ side walls (13); ~~at~~ the smaller hollow part (10b) comprises an endless ring-like intermediate wall (17) and a bottom wall (14), wherein the smaller hollow part (10b) contains a working enclosure defining a working space for ~~at~~ the wiring mechanism of the socket units (15), is characterised in that ~~which~~ a receiving track (19) of predetermined space is formed between the end and side walls of the larger hollow part (10a) and the endless intermediate wall (17) of the smaller hollow part (10b) when assembled and the receiving track (19) has an opening adjacent the bottom wall (14) of the smaller hollow part (10b); and a plurality of flexible retainer means (20) is integrally provided along the opening of the receiving track (19) bottom edge of the smaller hollow part (10b); whereby the extension cord (21) of predetermined length in single file can be fully retracted into the receiving track (19).
- 20 ~~2) An extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system as in Claim 1 wherein the predetermined length of the extension cord (21) depends on the number of turns around the perimeter of the working enclosure.~~
- 23) An extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system as in accordance with Claim 1 wherein each ~~the~~ flexible retainer means (20) takes the form of an inverted L-shaped element integrally provided along the bottom edge of the smaller hollow part (10b), wherein at the horizontal arm of each the L-shaped element covers partially the opening of the receiving track (19), and space is also provided between the inverted L-shaped element and the intermediate wall (17).
- 25 ~~3) An extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system as in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the cord storage and dispensing system comprises the receiving track (19) and the flexible retainer means (20).~~
- 30 34) An extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system as in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the cord storage and dispensing system comprises the receiving track (19) and the flexible retainer means (20).

- 4-5) An extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system as-in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the flexible retainer means (20) are integrally moulded as structural features of the smaller hollow part (10b) of the housing body (10).

CLAIMS

- 1) An extension socket device, electrically equipped with a plurality of socket units (15) and a cord storage and dispensing system, comprises a housing body (10) formed by two hollow parts (10a, 10b), an electrical plug (22) and an extension cord (21) wherein the larger hollow part (10a) of the housing body (10) comprises a top wall (11), end walls (12) and side walls (13); a smaller hollow part (10b) comprises an endless intermediate wall (17) and a bottom wall (14), wherein the smaller hollow part (10b) contains a working enclosure defining a working space for a wiring mechanism of the socket units (15), is characterised in that a receiving track (19) of predetermined space is formed between the end and side walls of the larger hollow part (10a) and the endless intermediate wall (17) of the smaller hollow part (10b) when assembled and the receiving track (19) has an opening adjacent the bottom wall (14) of the smaller hollow part (10b); and a plurality of flexible retainer means (20) is provided along the opening of the receiving track (19) whereby the extension cord (21) of predetermined length in single file can be fully retracted into the receiving track (19).
- 2) An extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein each flexible retainer means (20) takes the form of an inverted L-shaped element provided along the bottom edge of the smaller hollow part (10b), wherein a horizontal arm of the L-shaped element covers partially the opening of the receiving track (19).
- 3) An extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the cord storage and dispensing system comprises the receiving track (19) and the flexible retainer means (20).

- 4) An extension socket device with a cord storage and dispensing system in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the flexible retainer means (20) are integrally moulded as structural features of the smaller hollow part (10b) of the housing body (10).